

Name: Kay Stephens

Attribute this submission to: **Kay Stephens**

Organization (if applicable): **(No organization)**

Title of Hearing: **Hearing on Responding to Long-Term Unemployment**

I am a 99er who has lost benefits. What would you have us do? Get a job? Now there's an idea! I'm \$4,800 from homelessness.

When I was laid off from a marketing management position I held for over 18 year, I wasn't worried. I have great skills, contacts and experience, and *knew* I would find another position. In fact, I have been hired for every position I've ever applied for, until now.

But...job hunting at 50+ is a whole new world. Millions of us have discovered that ageism is alive and well. I keep the faith and pursue every avenue every day. But days turn into weeks, weeks turn into months and now two years later I'm beat down, I'm depressed, I experience panic attacks thinking about what will become of me. Right now my future doesn't look very bright.

Our plight as unemployed older workers is that, not only do we have to compete in a flooded and competitive job market, but we also have to battle ageism. Our group bears the greatest losses and the shortest time to recover. Our retirements are gone. Our credit is ruined. All of these factors compound the difficulty in finding work in a state (CA) with a 12.6% unemployment rate. This is a crisis of epic proportions and our representatives on Capitol Hill are doing nothing about helping those who have lost all benefits... the 99ers.

Tier IV UI benefits was passed when the unemployment rate, at least in California, was 12.5%. It's now 12.6%. Why did the previous rate warrant additional tiers then and not now? And, why is Washington turning a blind eye and a deaf ear to the millions of us desperately trying to get back to work? I keep hearing about the deficit from our elected officials and how they can't add to it. I think this fact alone will oust these ridiculous representatives in November. That's an easy out, but the truth is these people are eager to bail out political benefactors and not those people who've worked hard to make most this nation's wealth – especially those of us over 50 who are now classified expendable.

So now, I have lost my job, my health insurance, my home, my savings and hope. I've always been independent and it's more than I can bear to think of being dependent on my children who are also suffering economically.

How dare you assume that the long-term unemployed are sitting back languishing in the "free money" that we worked for our entire working life! I have employed friends who try to be supportive, but you can sense the, "if you really tried, you could find a job" in

that support. It makes me feel like a failure. For those of you who don't understand, you make me feel like a failure. I just want a job and I want my life back.

I WANT TO WORK. I HAVE TO WORK. Don't make it harder for us. Have some compassion.